



## The Caring Heart

### Welcome From Advocates of Nursing Home Residents

#### New York Family Council Coalition Continues to Work for improvements in Nursing Homes

Every 3 months a small group of dedicated family council members comes together to discuss the work they do in their individual homes in the Greater Metropolitan New York Area. This group is called Advocates of Nursing Home Residents (ANHR).

ANHR members work to make improvements in nursing home care by diminishing isolation, improving quality of care and life and giving a voice to residents and their caregivers in the nursing home community. ANHR members have had successes in Culture Change, bringing a family council law to NY State and developing relationships with nursing home administrators to better solve quality of care and life issues in their nursing homes. Looking to the future ANHR members hope to get more community members involved in nursing homes, work on legislation that will improve quality of life and quality of care and increase their advocacy successes across the region.

**CALL TO ACTION** Do you have a family council in your nursing home? If so, ANHR would like to know: What projects are you working on? What challenges do you face?

If you do not have a family council in your home but are interested in starting one, ANHR is here to help.

Being a part of our group will provide you with a great network of family council support and experience, plus the chance to be up-to-date on what other family councils are working on and achieving.

At this time and throughout the year we want to extend a welcome to any family council members interested in joining our group.

*You must be the  
change you wish to  
see in the world—  
Mahatma Ghandi*



### What is a Family Council?

A **Family Council** is a group of family and friends of nursing home residents who meet independently of the nursing home to assist in improving quality of life and quality of care for nursing home residents.

**Family councils** offer a way for family and friends to continue their role of caregivers in a supportive environment.

**FRIA** and

**Advocates of Nursing Home Residents**

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212-732-4455

*FRIA - the voice and resource for quality long term care- is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to fostering the dignity and independence of seniors in long term care settings, with a special focus on nursing home residents, and to ensuring that they receive prompt, high quality compassionate care. We seek to accomplish this by helping friends and relatives become more informed and effective caregivers for the needs of their loved ones. FRIA brings together, supports and trains families and friends to work together collectively to build and sustain strong and effective councils in nursing homes.*

## “The Future of Long-Term Care... Developing the Knowledge Workers of Tomorrow” A Conference

by Gilbert Sabater

I became familiar with names: Quality Care, Person Centered Care, Quality of Life, Dignity, Culture Change, etc. when I began attending NCCNHR Conferences in Washington. So, I was very excited about the invitation to attend 1199's Tenth Annual Conference on Quality Care. The tenor of the day was positive. One of the initial speakers noted that Quality Care is a journey and we are making progress, although it takes time. Several examples of initiatives launched in New York State in the past few years were given, including: offering restaurant style dining, screening residents to mentor children, creating a store for residents manned by residents, and splitting units into smaller living arrangements.

For me, the highlight of the morning session was the showing of excerpts from the film “Katrina” which portrayed how a particular nursing home dealt with the disaster in New Orleans. Emotionally, it was very touching; however, there was a very powerful message for everyone in the audience. If we can ignore titles and position and focus our efforts on the residents, we can overcome any adversity! It was a pleasure to see how the staff supported one another. Everyone pitched in keeping the residents safe and comfortable. Everyone rose to the occasion.

Also in the morning session an eclectic group of people broke out to discuss challenges we faced in 2009. The group came to the consensus that in order for the resident to receive true quality care and an acceptable quality of life, labor had to have direct input into the implementation of the accepted procedures in the homes. The most interesting part of the discussion was that the majority of the groups believed management was using the impending budget cuts as an excuse to “save” money and achieve greater efficiency on the back of the workers. All parties involved did not share the pain equally!

I chose the CMS Survey Process for the afternoon workshop. It was an eye opener for me. I was unaware of the many changes that had been instituted by the Federal government this past summer. The Quality of Life and Environmental Guidelines is a gem. How often have we experienced problems visiting our loved ones or with preserving dignity or self-determination of a resident's daily routine? Many issues that have made the resident's life unbearable in the past now seem to be addressed by the new regulations. Let's all pray that the States and Management adhere to the spirit and the letter of the new laws.

It was quite a day for me. As I was leaving, I met a couple of ladies who worked in a nursing home in Riverdale. They were happy with their day and remarked that they were also happy with their daily routine. I was surprised, given the substance of the discussion in my morning workshop. One was a nurse and the other a CNA. They painted a picture of contentment and appreciation for the culture in their nursing home that allowed them to provide a quality of care/life for each of their residents. It reminded me of the Katrina film and of the survey taken in the morning; yes, quality care is not a goal, it is a journey.

Challenge of the day: Despite improvements, only a little over 50% of conference participants would recommend their nursing home to a friend.

Spirit of the day: Simple tools like transparent communication and adopting the mantra, “we are here for the resident,” are cost free tools to improve patient care.

### Electronic Resources—In the Know for 2010

**New Nursing Home Inspection Tool**—New York will begin nursing home inspections with the new QIS survey process in late 2010 or early 2011. Read more here: <http://www.uchsc.edu/hcpr/documents/QIS-brochure-SC-08-21-01-2008.pdf>

**Nursing Home Bed to Assisted Living Program Transition**—Starting in 2010 and continuing for the next five years, 6,000 nursing home beds will be decertified and 6,000 ALP beds will open. To find out more about how this may affect the residents of your nursing home call FRIA at 212-732-5506 and sign up for bi-monthly email alerts. Current grant awards can be viewed at: [http://www.state.ny.us/governor/press/pdf/press\\_0925091-b.pdf](http://www.state.ny.us/governor/press/pdf/press_0925091-b.pdf)

**National Health Care Reform**—for updates on the long term care provisions in health care reform as the government moves toward a final bill go to: <http://www.aarp.org/>

#### Events 2010

**National Health Care Decisions Day 2010** is right around the corner. See how you and your nursing home can participate on April 16<sup>th</sup> at <http://www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org/>

**Older Americans Month**—The theme for May 2010 is Age Strong! Live Long! For more information follow the updates at <http://www.aoa.gov/>

**NCCNHR Conference**—A yearly meeting of a national group of long term care advocates. <http://www.nccnhr.org/node/209>

**QCC Conference**—for more information on the article above visit: [http://www.1199seiubenefits.org/training/labor\\_management/about\\_qcc/default.aspx](http://www.1199seiubenefits.org/training/labor_management/about_qcc/default.aspx)